

Arlington's Accessory Dwelling Ordinance

Alexandria's Housing
Affordability Advisory Committee
March 2, 2017

Background and History

Housing Commission releases recommendation (January 2008)

Community Outreach (January-July, 2008)

- Articles in newspapers
- Article in The Citizen
 - Goes to every Arlington household
- Notices in the Arlington Insider
 - Goes to almost 9,000 persons
- 2 Community Forums
 - Broad outreach including flyers in libraries and recreation centers

Background and History

Meetings on Proposal (January-July, 2008)

58 Meetings on the proposal were held, including:

- 28 Civic Associations
- 4 Civic Federation meetings
- 18 County Board Advisory Group meetings
- 2 Community Forums
- 4 Others, e.g. the Committee of 100
- 2 County Board meetings

Background and History

- Community Feedback
 - Overcrowding
 - Limits on County's ability to address problems in existing housing
 - Parking
 - Changing character of single-family neighborhood
 - Fear of large number of ADs being created
 - Lack of control on affordability of units
- Approved in 2008
- Very restrictive ordinance
- Only 20 approved since 2009

Background and History

Affordable Housing Master Plan

- Identified ADs as an existing tool to:
 - Provide an adequate supply of housing
 - Help older adults age in place
 - Provide a typically lower-priced housing alternative
 - Allow homeowners to receive additional income
- Recommends review of ordinance to encourage greater use
- Board directive during adoption was to look into adjustments over the next two years

Progress

- Published informational article
 - What is currently allowed
 - Benefits of ADs
 - Why the County is reviewing the ordinance
- Hosted two design galleries with the Alliance for Housing Solutions (AHS) to get input on detached ADs
- Started working with AHS and Civic Federation to develop community process
- Staff working group identified ordinance issues

Accessory Dwelling Working Group

- Purpose:
 - Advisory group to staff
 - Determine changes to ordinance
- Scope:
 1. Review current ordinance and its effectiveness
 2. Best practices
 3. Examine ordinance issues that limit usage
 4. Provide guidance on draft recommended changes
 5. Input on community engagement plan

Outreach Strategies

- ◎ Outreach/feedback strategies will include the following:
 - Resident survey
 - Community forum
 - HOME Show and Expo
 - Outreach to commission/community meetings
 - Housing News and Notes newsletter

Timeline

Activity	Lead		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Review										
Review current ordinance and effectiveness	Housing Commission/staff									
Review best practices from other jurisdictions	Housing Commission/staff									
Examine ordinance issues	Housing Commission/staff									
Provide guidance on draft recommendations	Housing Commission									
Recommendations to commissions (Housing, Planning, Aging, ZOCO)	County staff									
Request to Advertise	County staff									
County Board consideration	County staff									
Community engagement:										
Resident survey	County staff									
Educational presentation to civic associations, website, other organizations	Civic Federation/County staff/Housing Commission									
Public forum	County staff/Housing Commission									
Communications:										
County web page										
Housing News and Notes (housing e-newsletter)										
Civic group outreach (AHS, Civic Federation)										

Accessory Dwelling Provisions

- In Arlington, an Accessory Dwelling is an independent dwelling unit that:
 - Has its own kitchen and bath;
 - Is within a single family detached house;
 - Is designed, arranged, used or intended for occupancy by not more than two persons; and
 - Has a separate address & entrance.
- AD must meet building code requirements for a separate unit, e.g. fire separation, fire egress, separate heating and air handling.

Accessory Dwelling Elements

Element	Approved by County Board	Issues
Type of Unit	Interior ADs only	Unable to turn a detached garage into an AD
Type of House	Allow in single-family houses only.	Townhouses are not allowed
Size Limits	Interior: Maximum of 750 sq. ft. or 1/3 the size of the house and AD combined, whichever is less Exterior: N/A	If converting a space, like a basement, that is larger than 750 sq. ft. then you need to partition off part of the space.
Owner Occupancy Requirement	Yes; no waivers allowed, owner has to have lived in home at least a year	New home builders would like to be able to create single-family homes with an AD
Maximum Occupancy	Maximum of 2 occupants	Doesn't allow for a couple with a young child.

Accessory Dwelling Elements

Element	Approved by County Board	Issues
Deed Covenant	Required	Obtaining financing for a rental unit is problematic if the bank charges commercial rates rather than the residential rate
Certificate of Occupancy and Affidavit with Tenant Info	Required at initial occupancy and whenever new tenant(s) move in	
Parking Requirements	Parking survey required; parking requirements if over 65% parked	No process devised to perform the required parking survey should someone wish to have an AD who has no off street parking
Design Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AD door cannot be on the same side of house as the main entrance. -AD on corner lot cannot have its entrance visible from street -Exterior stairs to 2nd floor dwelling cannot be visible from the street 	Single family homes are allowed to have two entrances on the front side of the house, but you can't have the AD door on the same side as the main entrance.
Annual Limit	28 per year	

Questions?

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